

BOOK NOTICES

STUART GENTLING and SCOTT GENTLING. 2001. **Of Birds and Texas**. (ISBN 0-292-72834-4, hbk.) University of Texas Press, P.O. Box 7819, Austin, TX 78713-7819, U.S.A. (Orders: <http://www.utexas.edu/utpress>, 512-471-4032). \$75.00 hbk., 228 pp., 50 color plates, 28 color remarques, 8 figures, 9 7/8" × 12 7/8".

Of Birds and Texas is an edition of the original elephant folio limited edition published by the artists in 1985. It is an extremely personal work, if that word can be used of two people. They have written essays detailing the history of this publication and their fascinating research on John James Audubon to whom the folio edition was dedicated. In addition each plate is accompanied by a brief explication of their own relationship to the subject of the painting. The volume was meant to read and so includes an essay, *Self Portrait with Birds*, by the nature writer, John Graves. But the paintings are the focus after all. Naturally there are color differences between the folio edition and this one, but the accessibility of the book more than compensates for any loss. The emotional identification of the artists with the landscapes and birds and the careful attention to detail make each painting memorable.

The book is an exceptional tribute to Audubon.—*Ruth Ginsburg, Botanical Research Institute of Texas, 509 Pecan Street, Fort Worth, TX 76102-4060, U.S.A.*

Editor's note on Of Birds and Texas.—Of the 50 color plates, 10 are of landscapes of Texas and the remaining 40 are of birds. However, the Gentlings have painted more than just birds, there are at least 17 species of native, naturalized or cultivated plants in full color. Some of the plants painted in flower, fruit, and their spectacular foliage include, Water Hyacinth, Yellow Lotus, White Water-Lily, Sweetgum, Saw Greenbrier, Cedar Elm, Common Trumpet-Creeper, Texas Bluebonnet, Sycamore. Don't miss the flora for fauna.

"God hath made three beautiful things, birds, and women, and flowers,"—*John Sturat Blackie, The Botanist's song, 1869*. This is almost the perfect book.

CHRISOPHER KELLY (Editor). 2000. **Jean-Jacques Rousseau The Reveries of the Solitary Walker, Botanical Writings, and Letter to Franquieres**. Translated and annotated by Charles E. Butterworth, Alexandra Cook, and Terence E. Marshall. (ISBN 1-58465-007-9, hbk.) University Press of New England, 23 South Main Street, Hanover, NH 03755-2058, U.S.A. (Orders: Plymbridge Distributors Ltd., Estover Plymouth, PL6 & P2, UK 603-643-7100, ext. 233). £47.00 (ca. \$60) hbk., 349 pp. Frontispiece, 6 1/8" × 9 1/4".

In the middle of the 20th century, the taxonomist, Lloyd H. Shinnars, wrote that he was testing the validity and hope of the most romantic of sciences in an age hostile and alien to it. The writings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, the 'Father of the Romantic Movement' offer an interesting perspective on that earlier time when the science of botany was emerging. *Jean-Jacques Rousseau* offers an admirable translation of the nature essays and letters about botany, and thus makes available to the English reader a lesser known side of the great philosopher. The copious and well-written notes provide a valuable background to the circumstances of the walks as well as a short history of botany. Rousseau's deep appreciation of the beauties of nature and the lyricism of his writing are well served by this excellent book.—*Ruth Ginsburg, Botanical Research Institute of Texas, 509 Pecan Street, Fort Worth, TX 76102-4060, U.S.A.*